

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 7-10, 14-18, 20-27, 32-35 and 37-50 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The Examiner contends that the explanation of the means for coupling the housing with the cylinder and its recited function of not requiring extensive disassembly of the driven unit when the prime mover and the driven unit are separated was not described sufficiently in the written description. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

The problem that is overcome by the present invention is simply the problem of having to perform repairs with a limited-access assembly space without having to disassemble a large number of components beforehand to provide assembly clearance. This problem was solved by means of the separable connection 70 which enables a simple, uncomplicated separation of the release device (e.g., slave cylinder housing 5b or the outer ring 14c of the roller bearing 14) from the clutch housing 7. At page 40 of the specification, it is described in detail that there is a means 70 for coupling the extension 18 (intermediate ring) to the housing 7. Such coupling means 70 can include a bayonet lock or mount. In lieu of a bayonet mount (18d), other suitable coupling techniques can be employed, such as snap fastener means, tongue-and-groove connectors and/or other types of cooperating male-female connections serving to preferably separably secure the extension 18c to the housing 7.

Moreover, on page 64 of the specification, it is described that separable connections are preferably designed for disengagement by readily available tools or machines which are put to

use when it becomes necessary to rapidly detach the transmission from the engine for the purposes of maintenance, repair or replacement and the space which is available under the hood does not suffice to separate the transmission from the engine without prior detachment of the slave cylinder from the clutch housing. On page 50 of the specification, it is described that in conventional constructions, repair work cannot be carried out by moving the input shaft exclusively in one direction and in the present design, input shaft is easily moved and removed without requiring detachment of the slave cylinder and the transmission from the clutch housing prior to separation of the input shaft from the clutch.

Applicants respectfully submit that the aforementioned and also the detailed description of the individual parts and how they cooperate with one another and the drawing figures themselves sufficiently disclose the means for coupling the housing with the cylinder and the advantages that are obtained by having such a separable coupling between these parts.

Claims 1-3, 7-10, 14-18, 20-27, 32-35 and 37-50 stand further rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. The Examiner has objected to the use of the terms “reversibly” coupled and “extensive” disassembly. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection on the following grounds. First, Applicants believe that the specification is sufficiently clear as to the operation of the separable connection 70 and from a reading of the specification, one would understand that a member that is “reversibly” coupled is a member that can be not only coupled to another member but also can be detached or disengaged from the other member. Thus, it can be placed into engagement with another member and can also be disengaged from the other member. With respect to use of the term “extensive”, Applicants believe that one of skill in the art would understand that

The solution and being able to perform repairs within a limited-access assembly space without having to disassemble a large number of components beforehand to provide assembly clearance requires inventive thought. This problem was thus solved by means of the separable connection 70, which enables a simple, uncomplicated separation of the release device (slave cylinder housing 5b or outer ring 14c) from the clutch housing 7. As for Checa's solution, it should be noted that this issue of limited assembly space in the clutch bell housing was not under discussion more than 10 years ago. At that time, the assembly space in the clutch housing was substantially larger so that it was not necessary to separate the release device from the clutch in the manner described in the present application in order to perform the repairs. For this reason, Checa's solution requires substantially more space is required for the removal of the clutch. Attached hereto is Exhibit A which includes Fig. 3 from the present application and Fig. 1 from Checa, both of which indicate the axial clearance required for disassembly. These figures illustrate the advantages obtained with the present arrangement of components having the claimed features.

Applicants thus respectfully submit that the prior art devices fail to include the presently claimed feature and further fail to appreciate and comprehend the problem that Applicants' invention overcomes and therefore, the separable connection that is recited in the claims is neither disclosed nor suggested by any of the cited references.

Claims 2-3, 7-10, 14-18, 20-27 and 32-41 should be allowed as depending from what should be an allowed independent claim 1.

Claim 42 is an independent claim that includes the above described feature that is contained in claim 1 and therefore, claim 42 should be allowed for the same reasons as to why claim 1 should be allowed.

Claims 43-50 should be allowed as depending from what should be an allowed independent claim 42.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

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Respectfully submitted,

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